



BALLARAT  
GRAMMAR



# PARENTS' CHARTER

# **1 THE SCHOOL'S EXPECTATIONS OF PARENTS**

Ballarat Grammar prides itself on providing a breadth of high-quality educational experiences through an important partnership. This partnership, involving Grammar, students and parents, imposes obligations on all parties for the effective education of the young person. In particular, there are ways in which Grammar relies upon parents to assist in this process, and students are admitted to the School on the understanding that parents will support our stated expectations.

## **1.1 ETHICAL SUPPORT FOR THE SCHOOL'S ENDEAVOURS**

### **1.1.1 Grammar Values**

It is expected that parents will model these values (listed in Section 3), and encourage students to live by them.

### **1.1.2 Respectful dealings**

The School prides itself on a friendly and open social environment, and expects parents to model respectful dealings with others in the Grammar community.

## **1.2 OPTIMISING STUDENTS' LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES**

### **1.2.1 Preparing for the School Day**

Research shows a clear link between consumption of breakfast and learning effectiveness, especially if breakfast contains variety: at least three of the five main food groups. Researchers also point to sleep as a vital preparation for the learning day: 9 or 10 hours per day for teenagers – not much less than for children in primary school.

### **1.2.2 Attendance and Punctuality**

Parents are expected to support the learning process by ensuring students are attending school regularly, punctually and properly equipped for learning. In the compulsory years of schooling (to age 17 as of 2010 in Victoria), the School is accountable for students' attendance.

Furthermore, given the sequence of our carefully-planned learning activities, it is important for students to be in attendance throughout the year, unless illness occurs or a serious family matter takes precedence. If there appears to be a need for a student to be absent for reasons other than these, parents should seek permission for absence from the Head of Senior School or the Head of Junior School.

Parents are normally expected to refrain from arranging family holidays which impact on term time. Fourteen weeks holidays throughout the year provide ample scope for holidays.

### **1.2.3 Dropping and Collecting Students**

Parents dropping or collecting students from school are expected to exercise extreme caution in driving adjacent to the School (Dare Street and Forest Street) and in particular to refrain from illegal parking or double parking which presents a serious threat to students' safety.

### **1.2.4 Appearance of Students**

The generally smart appearance of our students begins at home! Parents are expected to make themselves familiar with rules for school uniform, hair and jewellery which are set out in the Study Planner.

### **1.2.5 Application and Motivation**

The School aims to develop in every child an appreciation that effort is required for achievement and fulfilment. All students are encouraged to give of their best, and any student who is really making an effort will be supported on their pathway through the School irrespective of their level of achievement.

However, any students who are failing to commit to academic endeavour are not only disadvantaging themselves; they are also detracting from the efforts of teachers and other students. Any such students will be challenged to improve their effort and performance. If students do not respond to this challenge, they and their parents will be required to meet with Senior Staff to formulate a course of action. Parents are expected to reinforce the expectations of Ballarat Grammar in this domain.

## **1.3 SUPPORTING STUDENT HEALTH AND WELLBEING**

### **1.3.1 Absence due to Accident/Illness**

Parents are asked to notify Grammar of student absences by phoning Reception (Junior School 5338 0846 or Senior School 5338 0700) if a student is absent due to illness or other pressing matter. If students become ill or are injured at school, they are required to visit the Health Centre. If they need to go home, Health Centre staff will contact parent and parents are expected to make arrangements to collect students.

If students need to be excused from Physical Education on health grounds, a note must be sent by parents.

### **1.3.2 Communicable Diseases**

It is likely that at some stage, students will contract common, childhood diseases. Parents are required to make every effort to ensure that any child suffering from the symptoms, retaining infection or convalescing from the disease does not attend school. Health Department regulations about exclusion periods from school can be found at <http://ideas.health.vic.gov.au/guidelines/school-exclusion-table.asp>

### **1.3.3 Health and Medication of Students**

The Health Centre provides health education for the Grammar community, as well as providing primary health care for students and staff.

*The Health Centre is staffed over the following hours:*

Monday 8:15am to 3:45pm

Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday 8:30am to 5:00pm

Friday 8:30am to 4:00pm

Parents are expected to inform the School of any medical matters which may affect a student's health and education. The School nurses can be contacted on telephone 5338 0852 or mobile 0417 307 232.

#### **1.3.3.1 Medication Procedures**

Parents are requested to inform the Health Centre of any medications being taken by the students. All medications, except asthma puffers, will be stored in the Health Centre or with the class teacher for the Junior School, unless other arrangements are made. All medications administered by the School nurse will be recorded in student's computer medical record.

#### **1.3.3.2 Prescription Medications**

Assistance will be given by the School nurse in the administration of prescribed medication if requested by parents/guardians. The School nurse may only administer or assist with administration of these medications if they clearly display the students' name and the required dosage. The medication should be supplied in its original packaging with labels intact and be within its use by date. Instructions regarding changes to the original dosage of long term or restricted medications must be in writing from the doctor and parent/guardian.

#### **1.3.3.3 Non-Prescription Medication**

Over the counter medications authorised by parents/guardians on the School medical form will be administered by the School nurse, if deemed necessary. Any medications required on a regular basis must be supplied by parents.

#### **1.3.3.4 Allergies**

To assist the School with the management of severe allergies, parents are requested to avoid sending nuts or nut-spreads, such as Nutella and peanut butter, in school lunchboxes.

#### **1.3.4 Appointments for students**

In order to minimise disruption to the continuity of the learning programs, parents are asked to avoid making doctors' appointments (or other such engagements) for their child during school hours, unless this is completely unavoidable.

#### **1.3.5 Chapel, Chaplains and Counselling**

Junior School Chapel takes place at 9:00am on Monday morning and parents of Junior School students are warmly invited to this service. The regular Sunday Service is the 7:00pm boarders' service, to which parents are also welcome.

The School Chaplains serve the wider School community as well as students and staff. The Chaplain, Fr Peter Treloar (0438 598 022), has counselling qualifications and can be approached directly by parents, as can the School Psychologist, Mrs Margot Murphy (0409 678 800). Mrs Murphy sees students, staff and parents both on campus and at her rooms in Ballarat.

### **1.3.6 Harassment Policy**

The School's Harassment Policy, outlined on our website and printed in the Study Planner, gives voice to our determination to cultivate a safe and inclusive environment for students, staff and parents. Each semester, parents are asked to sign this policy, along with students and staff, to indicate an understanding of the implications of this policy.

The School relies upon parents to report any incident involving harassment. The Policy outlines that parents can be confident that they will:

- Be taken seriously if they make a complaint
- Be treated with respect
- Be able to retain anonymity
- Have some say in how the complaint is handled
- Have the complaint treated in a manner consistent with the handling of other complaints

The School believes that, for the most part, it lives up to parents' expectations in this very challenging area. Of the relatively few incidents dealt with lately, a number have been of what is described as "cyber-bullying" through text messaging and media such as "Facebook". While this cyber-bullying normally occurs out of school hours, the School is prepared to share with parents responsibility for students' well-being in this area.

The School expects that parents will do all they can to encourage responsible use of electronic media and monitor this usage.

### **1.3.7 ICT Acceptable Use Policy**

The School's ICT Acceptable Use Policy aims to inculcate a responsible attitude to the usage of modern technologies. Parents can assist by developing appropriate attitudes in this area.

Each semester, parents are asked to sign this document, which the student also signs, in acceptance of the Policy.

## 1.4 SUPPORTING TEACHERS' ENDEAVOURS

### 1.4.1 Communication with Teachers

Both the School and parents have proper expectations of timely communication from the other party. Students' wellbeing is best developed where both school and parents are aware of how the student is progressing, at home and at school. Nevertheless, parents should understand that, at secondary level, a teacher would often be teaching in excess of 100 students, and a teacher's foremost duty is their dealing with young people. To enhance the effectiveness of communication, the School has regular reporting cycles. Where parents need to contact the School, this is most efficiently done through the class teacher in Junior School, the Home Room Teacher at Year 7 or the House Tutor (or Head of House) in Years 8 - 12. While email can be a very efficient way of communication, it is also important that teachers are not swamped by emails, and parents are therefore asked to ensure that email is used only for essential communication.

Senior Staff, including Heads of Junior and Senior Schools and the Headmaster are always open to direct communication from parents.

<b>Headmaster</b> <i>headmaster@bgs.vic.edu.au</i>	<b>5338 0816</b>
<b>Head of Senior School</b> <i>DepHead@bgs.vic.edu.au</i>	<b>5338 0961</b>
<b>Assistant Head, Wellbeing</b> <i>assistant.head@bgs.vic.edu.au</i>	<b>5338 0961</b>
<b>Assistant Head, Administration</b> <i>Rob.Gray@bgs.vic.edu.au</i>	<b>5338 0944</b>
<b>Head of Junior School</b> <i>Roger.Bade@bgs.vic.edu.au</i>	<b>5338 0846</b>
<b>Director of CEEd</b> <i>Karen.Nijam@bgs.vic.edu.au</i>	<b>5338 0896</b>

### 1.4.2 Homework

Guidelines about the amount of homework expected from students at different year levels are published in the Study Planner. The published homework policy also outlines the organisation expected with home study. Throughout the School, homework is seen as an integral part of the learning process and homework habit prepares students for VCE studies when a substantial amount of homework is essential.

The first thing parents can do here is to ensure that students are provided with a suitable study environment; a study desk that is well-lit and well-ventilated, but without too many distractions.

Parents are asked to check the details of homework recorded in the Study Planner and if the student records little or no homework or if the student appears overloaded with homework, parents should contact the class or homeroom teacher or house tutor.

An Australian review of research around the world examining homework effectiveness drew the conclusion, among others, that “parental involvement in homework is beneficial to students and positive parental involvement in homework is associated with higher levels of student achievement.”  
 (<http://education.qld.gov.au/review/pdfs/homework-text-for-web.pdf>)

### 1.4.3 Reports

Students’ reports, issued according to the following schedule, provide guidance for academic development and personal growth. It is really important that parents sit down with students to reflect upon accomplishments, and to set goals for coming terms. Senior School students are expected to complete, with parents’ assistance, written report reflections after Semester 1 reports.

	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Term 4
<b>ELC</b>	Kindergarten Profile Statements		Reception Profile Statements	Kindergarten Transition - Learning & Development Statements
<b>Junior School</b>	Week 8 or 9 - Interim Report Week 9 or 10 - Parent/ Teacher meetings	End of term - Semester Report	Week 8 or 9 - Interim Report Week 9 or 10 - Parent/ Teacher meetings	End of term - Semester Report
<b>Senior School</b>	Week 5 - Progress reports for all year levels, usually gradings only  Week 9 or 10 - Interim Report short comment for all subjects	Week 5 - Progress reports  Week 10 - Full Report including House & Music Tuition  Written report reflections required from students	Week 5 - Progress report for all VCE subjects  Progress reports - only for Students At Risk Years 7 - 10  Week 9 - Interim Report - all year levels	Week 5 - Progress reports (Year 7 -11)  Week 10 - Full Report including House & Music Tuition

### 1.4.4 Study Planner

The Grammar Study Planners contain important basic information about the School, for students and parents. They also contain a calendar of School events, and provide a diary in which homework and other commitments can be recorded. Brief notes, about matters such as homework, can be communicated between parents and teachers via the designated section of the Study Planner. Important

policies (on harassment, ICT acceptable use and uniform) are outlined in the Planner, and students and parents required to sign these in Semester 1 to acknowledge the obligations which these policies outline. Parents also play a part in the development of appropriate study habits by monitoring homework requirements, as recorded in each student's Planner, and by signing the Planner on a weekly basis, for students up to Year 10.

#### **1.4.5 Television, video games, the Internet and mobile phones**

All of these elements of modern technology can have valuable places in the life of the developing child. Indeed, the School uses these in controlled settings for positive educational purposes.

On the other hand, there is clearly the potential for wrongful use of these technologies to be very damaging. There are serious warning bells about the potentially damaging effects of excessive exposure even to benign screen technologies. Eminent neuroscientist Baroness Susan Greenfield asserts that permissive "screen culture" may be changing young people's brains, shortening attention spans and dulling empathy, for example.

This is a very difficult area for parents, as for schools, and one where it is all the more important for school and parental approaches to be closely aligned.

While different ages require different strategies, as a general rule it is suggested that:

- There should be some control/filtering of the content delivery of home internet access. This may be by downloadable electronic filter and also by stationing a home computer in a busy part of the house, where there is an element of personal supervision. (The implication here also is that students should not be given internet-capable phones.)
- There should be agreed hours of access to the internet, with the wireless access (or whatever system) switched off after bedtime.
- Likewise, for students up to Year 10, consideration should be given to putting mobile phones away out of reach during bedtime.

(In fact, boarders living at School operate within such a framework.)

Dr Michael Carr-Gregg's *Real Wired Child* is a recommended resource for parents in this domain.

### **1.5 SUPPORTING SCHOOL ACTIVITIES**

#### **1.5.1 Recognition of students**

Grammar celebrates the achievement of students in a great range of different areas, some of them outside the School program. The School appreciates advice from parents of any successful involvement that students (their own or others!) have had elsewhere.

#### **1.5.2 Helping out**

Parent volunteers are welcome in different areas: helping in the Canteen, reading with children in Junior School classes, coaching



rowing crews, etc.. Contact with the appropriate area of the School will enable opportunities to be explained. Some areas of involvement require a Working with Children Check. (<http://www.justice.vic.gov.au/workingwithchildren>) Ballarat Grammar may assist with the cost of this check where a volunteer provides essential capability.

### **1.5.3 Insurance cover**

Since the School's insurance policy does not normally cover items which it does not own, it is expected that parents will take out any necessary insurance cover to protect items which students bring to school. Likewise, it is recommended that parents take out accident insurance cover for students.

### **1.5.4 Sport**

At Grammar, students enjoy participating in both competitive and non-competitive physical activity, whilst understanding and appreciating the benefits to their physical and mental health and social well being, enabling the student to participate throughout life. The sport program at Grammar enables students to build self discipline, commitment and teamwork skills, as they give their best endeavours in striving for personal and team achievement. Grammar seeks to maximise the opportunities for students to participate in organised sport and aims to foster exemplary sportsmanship and fairness and a culture of respect for other participants at all times. In the Senior School, all students are expected to be involved in sport, preferably playing for the School. The support which parents provide for school sport is much appreciated.

## **1.6 Support Groups**

Parents are encouraged to enrich their children's education by being actively involved with one or more of the following, all of which can be contacted through the School's general telephone number.

**1.6.1** The Ballarat Grammar Auxiliary welcomes all parents and guardians to meetings at 9:00am on the first Friday of the month, in the Lawrie Room (Hayhoe House). The Auxiliary promotes the welfare of staff and students and brings parents together in social fellowship; it also assists with the funding of particular projects recommended by the Headmaster. The Auxiliary conducts a range of events, such as the mid-year dinner.

**1.6.2** The Parents' & Friends' Network meets in the evening on the first Wednesday of the month. The Network's objectives are to promote fellowship and communication between parents, friends and staff of Grammar; to assist in raising funds for the betterment of Ballarat Grammar; to support the School in the conduct of activities such as the Careers Expo and Parent-Teacher meetings.

**1.6.3** The Junior School Parents' Representatives Group promotes social interaction, especially among class groups.

- 1.6.4** The Ballarat & Queen's Old Grammarians' Association is a body of past students whose core activities are to maintain social communication between past students and the School and to ensure that past associations and memorable recollections are fostered for the betterment of the School and its past students.
- 1.6.5** The Vikings' Club, supported by current and past rowers' parents, supports Ballarat Grammar in delivering the equipment and environment to provide students with a positive sporting experience in rowing.
- 1.6.6** The Boarders' Parents' Network provides contact and support for boarding families.
- 1.6.7** The Friends of Music support the activities of the Music Department.

## **2 FINANCIAL DETAILS**

### **2.1 Accounts**

Grammar recognises the significant commitment made by parents through the payment of school fees. As is outlined in the Business Notice, fees are required to be paid prior to the commencement of term, unless other arrangements have been made with the Business Office. Any parents experiencing difficulty with fee payments are encouraged to contact the Business Office or the Headmaster. There are schemes which will assist fee-paying parents through periods of difficulty.

### **2.2 Fees Trust**

The Fees Trust charge on school accounts provides possible coverage for school fees in the case of extended student absence due to illness, or the death or disability of a parent. This coverage is obtained by accepting the charge on school accounts, and distributions may be accessed by application to the Headmaster.

### **2.3 Fees during absence**

In the case of extended absences over term time, the School policy is such that where students go on leave, wanting the place which they vacate to be held for them upon their possible return, the following fees should apply:

- For absences of up to two terms, full fees are payable;
- For absences beyond two terms, 75% of normal fees would be payable;
- Where absences spans one calendar year, 50% of fees would be payable for that year.

Parents would understand and appreciate that the School's cost by way of salaries and the provision of services do not diminish due to the absence of students over one term.

There are certain circumstances where this can be waived and, in these instances, written application can be made directly to the Headmaster.

### **3 BALLARAT GRAMMAR VALUES**

In line with its Christian ethos and liberal heritage, Ballarat Grammar seeks to promote the following values through all its endeavours:

**1. COMPASSION**

- a striving to care for self and others

**2. ASPIRATION**

- the pursuit of excellence, for worthy accomplishment, and to provide leadership, in intellectual and other domains, while still displaying humility

**3. JUSTICE**

- seeking the common good, where all are treated fairly

**4. FREEDOM**

- enjoying the rights and privileges of citizenship free from unnecessary control, and standing up for the rights of others

**5. HONESTY AND TRUSTWORTHINESS**

- being honest and dependable, and seeking the truth

**6. INTEGRITY**

- acting in accordance with principles of moral and ethical conduct

**7. RESPECT**

- treating others and their opinions with consideration; having regard for both tradition and innovation

**8. RESPONSIBILITY**

- being accountable for one's own actions; resolving differences in constructive and peaceful ways; taking care of the environment

**9. TOLERANCE**

- being committed to international and inter-cultural understanding; accepting diversity, and including others

**10. COURAGE**

- showing resolve in the face of adversity, and being enterprising and adventurous, prepared to take risks and learn from mistakes

**11. THANKSGIVING AND OPTIMISM**

- showing appreciation for the richness and the potential of life

**12. SERVICE**

- a willingness to contribute to the wellbeing of others through voluntary service to the community.

## 4. SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

### 4.1 Parents' Surveys

The School engages an external agent to conduct a survey of parents' satisfaction every two years. This survey is of real value only when a significant number of parents respond. All parents are encouraged to contribute to the development of the School through this instrument.

### 4.2 Complaints

The School recognises that concerns will arise from time to time. Parents have every right to expect that these concerns will be dealt with thoroughly and fairly, in a mutually respectful manner. The School also expects fair treatment in having concerns raised properly with it, rather than being voiced elsewhere. Communication of parents' concerns to the School can be very helpful in enabling the continuous improvement of the School's procedures.

The School's Complaints Policy can be found under "Documents for Parents" in the Parents' area of the Portal.

Questions or suggestions in relation to matters covered in this Charter (or matters which should be covered!) can be directed to:

[headmaster@bgs.vic.edu.au](mailto:headmaster@bgs.vic.edu.au)

**Stephen Higgs**

7 June 2012

## FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT

The Admissions Office  
[www.bgs.vic.edu.au](http://www.bgs.vic.edu.au)  
T (03) 5338 0830



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